



QUALITY ASSESSMENT AND ENHANCEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The Higher Education is the growing sector in India with a potential to make the country a developed nation in future. The quality at various levels of higher education will play an important role to make good citizens of the country. Strict policies and use of advanced software's will definitely help in maintaining the good quality education at higher education sector. To achieve the basic aim of higher education, there exists a strong need to bring out the best from the individuals personality. This great purpose requires selection of appropriate courses which should always be in consonance with the interest and hidden potentialities of the students.

It is quite obvious that students are the prime stakeholders in any system of higher education. Quality is the end product of responsiveness to their educational and professional needs and also to the need of personal development which has been the primary concern of the traditional systems of education in the country. Student aspirations and goals change in a fast changing world. That system of higher education, which is ready to honour them and shape its curricular and administrative performance accordingly is alone relevant. It can make student stakeholders partners in planning and governance rather than keeping them as docile recipient of that which is imposed on them without sensitivity to their changing needs and aspirations.

KEYWORDS: Higher Education, Quality Teaching, Stakeholder relative, Measures for Enhancement, Technological Advancement.

INTRODUCTION :

Higher Education is the largest sector which is affecting the youth. The present system which is followed in Primary Schooling, Secondary Schooling, Graduate and Post Graduate, Research Degrees which can be extended to post Doctoral research.

The Practical approach to the Science stream helps the students of science stream to understand and apply the theories of the subject in practical life. Technical Courses in Engineering, Medical and Management are controlled by AICTE, UGC and State Governments in maintaining the rules regulations and quality factors are also suggested. The NAAC, NBA in the present scenario are playing the crucial role by accrediting the Institutions of higher learning and awarding the grades in case of NAAC as per the quality of the Institutions and Universities by considering various parameters of quality like -1. Teaching & Learning 2. Student Support & Progression 3. Infrastructure & Learning Resources 4. Research & Extension Activities

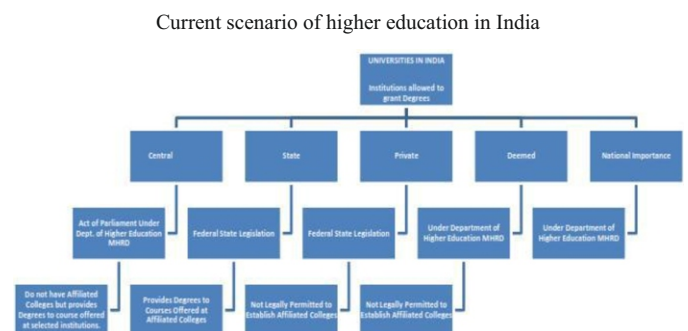
5. Governance & Leadership 6. Innovative Practices 7. Best Practices. 8) Financial Requirements 9) Stakeholders Role.

MEANING OF QUALITY :

The definition of quality teaching depends on the meaning of "quality", a multi-layered and complex word. Quality can be defined as an outcome, a property, or a process. Therefore it is hardly surprising that the phrase "quality teaching" has been given several definitions because definitions of quality are "stakeholder relative" (Harvey et al., 1992). Tam (2001) also found that all stakeholders held their own view of what quality in education means to them. Some scholars define quality in higher education as the process of quality enhancement. Hau (1996) argues that quality in higher education and quality teaching in particular, springs from a never-ending process of reduction and elimination of defects. Argyris and Schön (1974) believe that quality is driven by the inquest: "Are we doing things right?" and by the complementary question: "Are we doing the right things?" Definitions of quality in higher education as an outcome, a property or a process are not necessarily in conflict, and can potentially be used by higher education institutions as complementary. As a result, the review does not adopt one definition of quality teaching and opts instead to look into how the institutions have defined quality education. Vision and Goals India has emerged as a global leader and a strong nation at the turn of this century.

Education is the key to the task of nation building as well as to provide requisite knowledge and skills required for sustained growth of the economy and to ensure overall progress. The Indian education system recognizes the role of education in instilling the values of secularism, egalitarianism, respect for democratic traditions and civil liberties and quest for justice. It aims at creating citizens equipped with necessary knowledge, skills and values to build an inclusive, just and progressive society. The three pillars of education are expansion, inclusion and excellence. Our Vision is to realize India's human resource potential to its fullest, with equity and excellence.

PRESENT SCENARIO OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA :



The Higher Educational Infrastructure in India Figure-1 shows the field of 'Higher Educational Institutions' in India. 'HE' in India is provided by five groups of institutions: Central, State, Private, Deemed Universities and Institutions of National Importance. ii. There are 52 such institutions. They predominantly consist of the Indian Institutes of Technology, National Institutes of Technology and prominent Medical Colleges, including the All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS). The following table shows the total number of universities in the country:

Total No. 1 of Universities in India (As on 25-05-2016)

Universities	Total Number
State Universities	347
Deemed to be Universities	123
Central Universities	47
Private Universities	237
TOTAL	754

Source: <http://www.ugc.ac.in/oldpdf/alluniversity.pdf>

There are 47 central universities, 347 state universities, 237 private universities and 123 deemed universities in India as listed by the 'University Grants Commission' (UGC), the apex regulatory body for higher education. All the above university groups are legally entitled to grant degrees. State universities are the only institutions that are allowed to affiliate private as well as public colleges under them. However, these colleges are allowed to operate only within the individual federal state borders. Private colleges offering professional courses, which match specific needs of a sector or industry, are often affiliated to state universities. Affiliated colleges are called 2f and 12b colleges according to the latest figures, there are approximately 9,195 such affiliated colleges in India supported by the UGC. The federal states of Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra have the maximum number of affiliated colleges of 1,677 and 1,185 respectively. Karnataka

(766), Chattisgarh (488), Gujarat (486), Tamil Nadu (468), and West Bengal (433) too have large number of affiliated colleges under their federal state universities. While private universities do not have affiliated colleges, these universities also offer professional as well as regular courses in it. Even after 69 years after Indian independence, we are far away from the goal of universal literacy. There are number of schools in the country, but they don't have proper basic infrastructure. But on a positive note, Indian professionals are considered among the best in the world are in great demand. This signifies the inherent strength of Indian education system. In technical education, the IIT's, and in management, the IIM's have already marked their names among the top higher educational institutions of the world. Moreover the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi; Delhi University (DU), Delhi and South Asian University (SAU), New Delhi, are also regarded as good higher educational institutions for doing post-graduate courses and research in science, humanities and social sciences. As a result, students from various parts of the world are coming today for higher education in India.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION :

Academic Reform Transformation of higher education requires specific strategies for academic reforms at the institutional level. Quality improvement in higher education has been initiated through restructuring academic programmes to ensure their relevance to modern market demands. Complete revamping of teaching/learning methods from instruction and rote learning to interactive process that encourages creativity and innovation and is based on compulsory seminar-tutorials is being advocated in the universities and colleges. Some universities have begun to follow semester system, modification in assessment and examination methods, teacher's assessment, acceptance of grade and credit system and other related reforms.

The introduction of credit system in Indian universities will contribute to the development of quality in higher education through using a common and transparent system for the measurement and expression of academic work and learning outcomes of the students. This will also facilitate the mutual recognition of degree and qualification and will also ensure compatibility with the academic norms practiced in similar institutions in India and abroad. UGC has written to all universities about the need to adopt credit system with credit accumulation along with other academic reforms while some of the universities have introduced the system recently, many others are in the process of introducing the same. It is suggested to introduce the credit system in phases. In the first phase the universities may consider to adopt the credit system in a few departments followed by the acceptance of the credit system across all departments. In the second phase, universities may ask all the autonomous colleges to follow the credit system and as the process develops, the credit system may be introduced at the undergraduate level. The whole process may take a longer time period depending on the maturity of the academic system. Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme (TEQIP) was conceived and designed as a long term project to support excellence and transformation in Technical Education in the country. TEQIP Phase-I implemented with the assistance of World Bank as a centrally coordinated Central and State Sector Project with a total cost of Rs. 1,339 crore from March 2003 to March 2009. Out of this Rs. 306 crore was Central Component and the remaining Rs. 1033 crore was State Component. The cumulative expenditure up to 31st March, 2009 was Rs. 1321.80 crore which is 99% of the total project allocation. Based on the achievements made during TEQIP Phase-I, TEQIP Phase-II is to be implemented as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) with the assistance of the World Bank at a total cost of Rs. 2,430 crores out of which Rs. 1395.50 crores will be World Bank assistance, Rs. 500 crore Central contribution and Rs. 518.50 crore State contribution from the participating States and Rs. 16 crore from the private unaided institutions. The funding pattern will be 75:25 between the Centre and the participating States and for North Eastern States it will be 90:10. The TEQIP-II project is for duration of 4 years covering about 200 institutions based on competitive funding and likely to be effective from 2010-11. The central objective of the 11th plan is now focused on "Expansion of enrolment in higher education with inclusiveness, quality, and relevant education and supported by necessary Academic Reforms in the university and college system.

These studies have given necessary input in evolving the perspective on each of these objectives. Since these studies are based on the serious research and examination of official data, the findings in many ways are new and insightful. The finding also presents the emerging issues in higher education system in the country and the possible way out. Since the studies are rich and new in their content the UGC decided to publish them in the form of a report for the use of the academic community. We are hopeful that the central and state government, academic administrator, policy maker, educational institutions, and researchers will find the insights of these studies of use for various purposes.

SUGGESTIVE MEASURES FOR ENHANCEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION :

1. Teaching, Learning and Evaluation.

- (i) Clarity and transparency in the process of admission and recruitment of faculty should be maintained. The most crucial factor in ensuring excellence of teaching, learning and evaluation is the quality of the faculty. If merit is the only criterion for recruitment, and no other influences are entertained, it will automatically ensure outstanding academic performance.

- (ii) Faculty development programmes, such as conditions of service, participation in seminar, symposia, conferences, orientation programmes, refresher courses, publications are important in continuous updating of quality teachers. Monitoring and periodic performance appraisal including access to feedback mechanism will improve the quality of attaining excellence, objectivity and accountability of the teaching faculty.
- (iii) Visible welfare measures will motivate the teachers in achieving greatest academic pursuits. So, measures should be taken into account to reduce stress and strain of the faculty members.

2. Curricular Aspects

India is a country of diverse geographical features, multi religious communities and multilingual population and a different socio-economic and cultural background. Unity in diversity is the basis of Indian society. In the current decades with much emphasis on economic development accompanied by tremendous explosion of knowledge in all spheres have led to economic differences. Always, there are regional imbalances in the country. Realizing such irregularities, the curriculum should be framed. The courses available through higher education must be consistent with goals and objectives of the country and aspirations of the students. The changing social, educational and economic environment are important determinants of curricular options so as to meet the challenges of the present day society.

3. Research, Consultancy and Extension

Today, education and research are highly interdisciplinary. Research is diligent inquiry and careful search for new knowledge or facts through a systematic scientific and analytical approach in any branch of knowledge. It is an undisputed fact that research and economic development of any country always go hand in hand as both are interdependent on each other. In addition to teaching the prescribed curricula, under-taking research projects on various socio-economic researchable problems by teachers, has been given considerable recognition

Research work should be done in a large scale by providing financial support and the additional infrastructure facilities. Forward and backward linkages should be established for augmenting research and mobilizing fund. Community extension programme should be arranged in the university to develop social infrastructure and learning resources.

4. Infrastructure and Learning Resources

One of the most important areas for quality improvement is the development of infrastructure and learning resources. Infrastructure should include a wide range of supporting services such as gymnasium, playgrounds, canteen, computer centre, multimedia conference hall, library and hostel etc. while conceptualizing the institution of higher education, it is important to plan not only for today but also for tomorrow. Infrastructure should be both adequate and appropriate as per the norms of the UGC/AICTE etc. Students, staff and faculty members should have access to the use of new technology including internet.

5. Student Participation and Progression

There are several hopeful trends in the course, which support the student involvement in quality enhancement. Firstly, the employers prefer institutions that have demonstrable academic quality along with value adding activities involving the students. Secondly, those students who have participated in the institutional quality processes are able to make rational career choices and thirdly the performance of such students in facing up to the job interviews and placement exhibits a higher degree of self-confidence and maturity. Therefore, it is imperative that every institution makes a conscious effort to associate students in their quality enhancement programmes.

6. Organisation and Management

An Institution / University should offer facilities for over all development of the students. Higher Education is not only in the concurrent list but also in the joint sector. The central and state government play an important role in laying down the policy and offering financial support for smooth management of the institution.

Faculty development programmes including promotion etc. are to be implemented by the government / management based on merit and without any discrimination. It is mandatory for the managing authority to strictly adhere to the University Act. Statutes, Ordinances, Regulations and Rules for healthy and efficient functioning of the colleges.

Enhancing quality is a holistic process. The synergistic relationship among the students teachers, management, parents, public, government and the production system is essential to achieve an enduring multiplier effect on quality enhancement.

CONCLUSION:

Quality has both absolute and relative meanings. The concept of absoluteness in quality props up the moral of the higher education system at the delivery end and at the receiving end i.e. Institutional and Students respectively. The quality of a higher education system may be seen from the point of view of norms and standards, which may evolve depending on the need of the hour. The alternative

dynamics for teacher preparation and the sustaining quality in teacher input, like: Curriculum design and development; Curricular practices vis-à-vis Evaluation of learner's performance and progress vis-à-vis curriculum evaluation; and, Quality management practices become crucial. The quality of these components may also differ from institution to institution. Therefore, sharing of the experiences among institutions on quality issues may generate ideas for evolving norms and strategies for their quality assurance of management processes, curricular inputs and practices and the evaluation system as well.

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